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DRAFT REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME MATTERS ON ITS IN-SESSIONAL MEETING HELD DURING THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, 10-14 FEBRUARY 1992

Addendum

Rapporteur: Mr. Ryszard RYSINSKI (Poland)

CHAPTER III. PROGRAMME PLANNING: COUNTRY AND INTER-COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS (continued)

Sri Lanka

1. The Resident Representative presented the Sri Lanka country programme ($56.3 million IPF, including a carry-over of $11.2 million from the fourth cycle), which has the following areas of concentration: (a) consolidation of an outward-looking, open-market economy; (b) public sector management of the development process; (c) human development and poverty alleviation; and (d) management of natural resources and the environment. These are consistent with global concerns as articulated in Governing Council decision 90/34.

2. The presentation highlighted the collaborative nature of the country programming exercise, which included an assessment of the performance of the fourth country programme, in-depth consultations with the Government on its development objectives, plans and priorities, and a number of sectoral reviews carried out with the involvement of the United Nations specialized agencies as well as consultations with other multilateral and bilateral donors active in Sri Lanka through the ongoing aid coordination process.

3. The Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that Sri Lanka has one of the highest human development rankings relative to its gross national product (GNP). This has clear implications for its development strategy, which places the highest priority on economic growth, job creation and public sector reform. The Government recognizes that its development strategy must focus on economic growth and human development, including poverty alleviation. The country programme seeks to strike a balance between these two imperatives.

4. Many delegations supported the programme, noting its four areas of concentration, and that it was generally well-balanced and well-structured with regard to Government priorities. They also felt that the programme was well suited to UNDP strengths and technical cooperation capacities. Based on the January 1992 visit of SCPM members to Sri Lanka, the close cooperation between the Government and the UNDP field office to achieve effective use of UNDP resources was confirmed.

5. As regards the substantive thrust of the programme, many delegations endorsed the emphasis on consolidating the open market economy and public sector reform, which it felt was appropriate in the Sri Lankan context. They also endorsed the focus on human development and poverty alleviation. One member of the Committee queried whether women's issues were accorded sufficient attention. In reply, the Resident Representative stated that since Sri Lanka's achievements on that score were impressive and while such issues were definitely a priority concern in the country, the issue was naturally accorded a relatively lower priority in the country programme than would be appropriate in some other countries.

6. Some delegations noted the efforts being made in the management of the programme to reduce the number of independent UNDP-supported projects. They felt that these efforts should continue. Several members also felt that the performance indicators at the thematic level were rather general; however, the Committee was assured that more specific indicators would be included at the project/programme level. The movement toward a programme approach and capacity-building for national management was also supported.

7. In response to a question relating to implementation problems arising from the brain drain and the shortage of counterpart funds, the Resident Representative agreed that both were problems which needed to be addressed. He noted that the brain drain represented an awkward issue as it was largely the result of the pull of the external labour market, as well as of the large number of highly skilled Sri Lankans who were attracted to work abroad. He further noted that counterpart funds were generally less of a constraint in technical cooperation than in capital assistance projects funded by the major donors.

Colombia

8. The fifth country programme for Colombia has an IPF of $11.7 million, less a negative carry-over of $1.2 million from the fourth programme, and

cost-sharing of $62.2 million, giving total resources of $72 million. It is estimated that additional complementary resources of some $59.1 million will be mobilized.

9. The country programme covers four thematic areas in which UNDP has comparative advantages: (a) social development and the elimination of poverty; (b) economic liberalization and productive development; (c) territorial development and the modernization of the State; and (d) sustained environmental development. They coincide with objectives of the national plan and are consistent with Governing Council concerns as articulated in its decision 90/34.

10. The cooperation strategy of UNDP aims at strengthening specific areas of Government capacity, paying particular attention to four main functions: (a) the design of national programmes and mechanisms for institutional action; (b) the implementation of innovative actions which could generate replicable sectoral and regional models; (c) the promotion and mobilization of resources for cooperation; and (d) the strengthening of procedures for the follow-up and assessment of the efficiency and impact of national programmes.

11. The fifth country programme for Colombia was extremely well received by the delegations represented in the Committee. Six delegations took the floor in support of the programme's approval and commended the Resident Representative for his clear and comprehensive presentation. Most delegates emphasized the suitability of the programme for Colombia, given the profound changes that the country is experiencing. The successful coordination role of UNDP was stressed and it was noted that the Special Cooperation Plan for Colombia, prepared with the assistance of UNDP, provided the frame of reference for other donors. The trust of the Government and other donors in the programme was reflected by the substantial amount of cost-sharing contributions made. The Government's commitment to the fight against drugs was commended and it was hoped that UNDP would continue to assist in the coordination efforts for the provision of assistance by donors in such an important area.

12. In reply to queries, the Resident Representative emphasized the efforts of the Government in preparing a national cooperation programme with the assistance of UNDP through the national technical cooperation assessments and programmes (NaTCAP) methodology in order to strengthen the management of external cooperation. He added that the programme foresees the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in several activities, particularly in the process of decentralization to the level of the municipalities and communities and in assistance to the areas of conflict as well as in strengthening the institutional capacity of the confederation of NGOs. Finally, the Resident Representative stressed that the fifth country programme would contribute significantly to the process of change initiated by the Government towards a society which was more just, democratic and respectful of human rights.

Ecuador

13. The fifth country programme for Ecuador has an IPF of $11.0 million and $15 million in cost-sharing; it should be emphasized that this amount will probably increase during the cycle through joint Government/UNDP resource mobilization efforts.

14. The programme is focused on three areas of concentration: (a) diversification of the economy; (b) poverty eradication; and (c) rationalization of public sector management. These coincide with the areas of focus for capacity-building recommended in Governing Council decision 90/34.

15. Within this framework, the principal objective is to assist the Government in the formulation of policies, strategies and programmes in those priority areas that will allow the country to move towards a more equitable and economically sustainable society. Given the limited resource availability, the IPF will be used mainly as seed money and for rapid disbursement to mobilize additional resources from multilateral and bilateral sources.

16. The country programme was commented upon favourably by eight delegations. Three speakers commented upon the need to ensure adequate impact through concentration of UNDP resources, especially in view of the scatterization experienced during the fourth cycle, mentioning that the present programme represents a step in the right direction. One delegate emphasized the need for careful coordination of external cooperation within the donor community. Another intervention focused on the involvement of NGOs and the private sector as active participants in the fifth cycle.

17. In reply, the Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean emphasized that dispersion is being minimized through concentrating UNDP interventions not only in a reduced number of areas but within each area so as to ensure that the role of UNDP is commensurate with resource availability and its comparative advantages. In order to provide the country with the necessary resources for controlling its economic and social development process, UNDP resources would be oriented to (a) upstream activities related to policy formulation and the design of national programmes; (b) the systematic introduction of the programme approach; and (c) the creation of national capacities. The Regional Director confirmed the use and promotion of NGOs and the private sector, particularly in the support to microenterprises.